

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 2-5, 8, 10, and 16-20 have been canceled herein. Claims 1, 9, and 11 have been amended herein. All of the pending claims 1, 6, 7, 9, and 11 through 15 are presented herein. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application. Please enter these claims as amended.

Listing of the Claims:

1. (Withdrawn and currently amended) A process for modulating virulence of a *Streptococcus* comprising:
modifying a genomic fragment of the *Streptococcus*;
wherein at least part of the genomic fragment is capable of hybridizing to a nucleotide sequence selected from the group of nucleotide sequences consisting of any one of SEQ ID NOS: 8-45 or fragments thereof of the isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 11; and
generating a clone having the modified genomic fragment.
2. (Canceled).
3. (Canceled).
4. (Canceled).
5. (Canceled).
6. (Withdrawn) The process according to claim 1, wherein modifying the genomic fragment comprises functionally deleting the at least part of the genomic fragment capable of hybridizing to the nucleotide sequence.
7. (Withdrawn) A clone of a *Streptococcus*, obtained by the process according to claim 1.

8. (Canceled).

9. (Withdrawn and currently amended) A process for assaying virulence of a *Streptococcus* comprising:

assaying an ability of the *Streptococcus* to infect a subject;

wherein the *Streptococcus* comprises a genomic fragment associated with a virulence factor to infect a subject; and

wherein at least part of the genomic fragment is capable of hybridizing to ~~a nucleotide sequence selected from the group of nucleotide sequences consisting of any one of SEQ ID NOS: 8-45 or fragments thereof the isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 11.~~

10. (Canceled).

11. (Currently amended) An isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of a *Streptococcus* origin comprising:

a nucleotide sequence capable of hybridizing to the full length of ~~a the nucleotide sequence selected from the group of nucleotide sequences consisting of SEQ ID NOS: 15, 16, 17, 24, 31, 33, 34, 37, 41 and 43 of SEQ ID NO:37;~~

wherein the hybridizing occurs at 65°C in a buffer having 0.5 M sodium phosphate, 1 mM EDTA, and 7% sodium dodecyl sulphate at a pH of 7.2.

12. (Original) A vector comprising the isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 11.

13. (Previously presented) A host cell comprising the isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 11.

14. (Original) The host cell of claim 13, wherein the host cell is of a *Streptococcus* origin.

15. (Previously Presented) A composition comprising the isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 11.

16. (Canceled).

17. (Canceled).

18. (Canceled).

19. (Canceled).

20. (Canceled).